

For Sale Sign Removed From Vigo Co. Fairgrounds

Somewhat reluctantly, members of the Vigo County Fairground Board have set aside for the present the for sale sign on fairgrounds property located on U. S. Highway 41 south of Terre Haute.

In approving a motion not to sell, board members also left the door open to sell at a future date in the form of an expression—"entertain any realistic proposal from the city or county park boards, or from private enterprise. The decision was reached Wednesday night during a meeting of the fair board at the Terre Haute House.

Ray Ingram, Fair Board president, presided at the meeting. He told the assembly the purpose of the meeting was to explore what had happened on city and county levels concerning initially expressed interest in the fairgrounds.

Jack Wood, speaking for the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board, said his group did not want "to compete" for ownership of the fairgrounds. Fox Burns, a county board member, said he thought present ownership and management of the grounds should be continued.

Members of the City Council expressed some interest in the fairgrounds last January when it was learned an \$89,000 bequest from the will of Julius Brittlebank had been offered the city provided the city establish and maintain a park to be named in honor of Brittlebank.

When City Park Board member Sid Levin was asked to comment on the city's interest in acquiring the fairgrounds, he said, "It's like trying to buy the Wabash River bridge—I don't think it's for sale." He told those attending the meeting that when the board answers questions as to price and restrictions on the fairgrounds the City Park Board would take the matter under consideration.

Ingram read a letter from Vigo Circuit Judge H. Ralph Johnston in which he pointed out \$89,000, even with matching funds from federal assistance, would be insufficient to purchase and maintain a city park of useful size. He said there is ample park space in the city and that terms of the Brittlebank will are broad, in that no size limitation is specified.

Assn. Needs Money

Judge Johnston noted in his letter that it is generally known the Vigo County Fair Association needs funds and the city needs storage space. He suggested a portion of the fairgrounds might be acquired by the city for use as a park and some kind of arrangement might be worked out where the city could use storage buildings at the fairgrounds.

Don Smith, former president of the Fair Board, said the financial situation is not desperate. He pointed out current notes due local banks amount to \$21,000 and bonds due in 1970 total \$100,000. He said in-

terest on the bonds is paid up to date.

In discussing the city's responsibility to the man who left the money, Levin said he felt the matter should be treated with dignity and indicated the city park board would continue studying establishment of the park as requested.

Fairgrounds may become area park

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The possibility of a program of year-round recreational activities at the Vigo County Fairgrounds is being pursued and discussed, according to Dr. Walter Gray, fair president.

Gray said, during the weekly meeting of the Terre Haute Committee for Area Progress, that there has been a lot of new activity at the fairgrounds during the past year and "people are beginning to get the idea that the fairgrounds belong to everybody."

"With the growth of the city south, why not think in terms of a free fair, with the county taking over the fairgrounds as a park and maintaining it as such. There is no park except the golf course in this area," he continued.

The board is working on hiring a full-time caretaker to live at the fairgrounds, Gray said. This position has been advertised and candidates are being interviewed.

Todd Jorritsma, chairman of the grounds committee for the fair, said the laborers who had donated their time to making various improvements at the fairgrounds did so with the

youth of the community in mind and told the committee about plans to construct a multi-purpose building from donated materials later this year at the fairgrounds.

He said the building will be used as an information center, a meeting place for various groups at the fair, a check-in point for race drivers and will provide a working area for the news media and a place for the Red Cross Station.

Jorritsma said there also are plans to rejuvenate the grandstand next year.

Last month members of the various craft unions, using materials donated by local businessmen, donated their labor and built a new 4-H Junior Leader building at the fairgrounds and made many other improvements and additions.

Benny Williams, chairman of the board's finance committee, said that Vigo County citizens will have the opportunity to help the Wabash Valley Fair Association pay off the \$170,000 mortgage on the fairgrounds.

The drive will begin with an invitational barbeque for about 500 persons from 4 to 8 p.m. Saturday at the fairgrounds.

Every county resident is being asked to donate one dollar and one item from their garage, barn or attic which can be sold at an auction at 1 p.m. Sunday, July 16, at the fairgrounds. Proceeds will go to the fund drive.

The dollar may be deposited at collection points to be set up in each township or sent to the Wabash Valley Fair Association, Box 839, Terre Haute, 47808.

Items for the auction may be brought to the main building at the fairgrounds anytime during the week of July 10.

Earlier Thursday, Max Miller, Vigo County Extension Service agent, told The TRIBUNE that the fair office is now open and secretaries are on duty.

"The fair books have been sent out and anyone interested in sending in an entry or entries for the shows and projects may do so through the entry blank in the book or by contacting the extension office or the fair office," Miller said.

Miller added that Dorothy Archer is the new superintendent for the women's department and is available to answer any questions concerning the department.

The Vigo County Fair is scheduled from July 22 through July 28.